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IN THIS ISSUE:

News Releases—

Forest Service Announces Changes in Tongass National Forest Timber Contract

USDA Announces CRP Rental Rates for 9th Signup

Look for the Greenest Greens at the Produce Counter

Team Named for Follow-Up Agricultural Trade Mission to Southeast Asia

Coyotes Don't Like Shaggy (Guard) Dog Story

USDA Announces Final Results of 1989 Farm Program Signup

205
10/1/89

News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

FOREST SERVICE ANNOUNCES CHANGES IN TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST TIMBER CONTRACT

WASHINGTON, Sept. 14—After three years of negotiation, the Alaska Pulp Corp. and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service have agreed to major changes in the corporation's long-term timber contract for harvesting in the Tongass National Forest in Alaska.

“The contract revisions address concerns expressed by Congress and the public over the last few years,” said Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson. “The most significant change is that the federal government and the taxpayers will get full market value for the timber sold.”

Major changes in the contract include:

- An upward rate provision expected to increase the price of timber harvested from the \$1.47 per thousand board feet to \$80 or \$90 per thousand board feet, depending on market value.

- Much closer conformity with other timber sale contracts.

- Forest Service selection and designation of timber to be harvested. Harvesting must be completed on existing units before new areas will be made available.

The Alaska Pulp Corp. contract was initiated in 1956 as part of an effort to promote economic development in southeast Alaska and to provide stable employment for residents, Robertson said. It is one of two remaining long-term timber sale contracts that have been questioned by Congress and the public, particularly for the value received for timber from the Tongass National Forest.

The other long-term contract with Ketchikan Pulp Co. has been renegotiated and rates for timber already have been adjusted in line with current market conditions.

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USDA ANNOUNCES CRP RENTAL RATES FOR 9TH SIGNUP

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15—Maximum acceptable rental rates (MARR) by pool for the ninth Conservation Reserve Program signup, July 17 - Aug. 4, will be unchanged from those in the eighth signup, according to Keith Bjerke, Executive Vice President of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corp.

Bjerke said that USDA had received offers to place 4,217,074 acres of highly erodible cropland in the CRP during the ninth signup. Final data on the ninth signup will be available after Dec. 15.

Bids in excess of the applicable pool MARR will not be accepted, Bjerke said. In addition, bids in excess of the local prevailing rental rate for an acre of comparable land as determined by the local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committee will not be approved.

Participants in the CRP sign a contract agreeing to keep erodible cropland out of production and in a conserving use for 10 years. Through the eighth signup, the acres enrolled in the CRP have resulted in a reduction in erosion by nearly 20 tons per acre on 30.5 million acres of cropland. Additionally, over 150,000 wetland acres will be preserved. Filter strip acreage (i.e., land along streams, rivers and lakes taken out of production to control runoff and improve water quality) enrolled in the CRP now totals over 5,000 miles of such strips.

Bjerke noted that over 2 million acres of trees have been planted on CRP acreage and there has been enhanced wildlife habitat as a result of specific plantings and installation of other practices. "Over 30.5 million acres have already been enrolled in the first eight CRP signups," he said. "The goal is to enroll 40 to 45 million acres by the end of the 1990 crop year."

Printed copies of tables that show the maximum acceptable rental rate per acre by state and pool number and bid totals by state can be obtained from the USDA Office of Information, News Division, Room 404-A, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone: (202) 447-4026, ask for press release 1213-89.

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LOOK FOR THE GREENEST GREENS AT THE PRODUCE COUNTER

MIAMI, Sept. 15—"Eat your greens!" is even sounder advice than our grandmothers thought in light of nearly 20 years of research findings linking these vegetables with a lower risk of cancer.

And the greener our greens, the better, a U.S. Department of Agriculture chemist reported this week.

"The greener the vegetable is, the higher its level of chlorophyll, and that means higher levels of carotenoids," said Frederick Khachik of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Carotenoids are the red and yellow pigments, including beta carotene, thought by some to protect against cancer.

Khachik and colleagues at the ARS Nutrient Composition Laboratory in Beltsville, Md., analyzed carotenoid levels in six green vegetables eaten in the United States and in nine common to the Cook Islands in the South Pacific, where the relationship of diet to cancer is under study.

They also assessed the effects of boiling, steaming and microwaving on carotenoid levels in U.S. vegetables, using sensitive analytical techniques they developed. The studies were funded by the National Cancer Institute.

"All green vegetables have the same carotenoids but in varying concentrations," Khachik reported at the fall meeting of the American Chemical Society in Miami. "You can actually see the difference by the intensity of the color."

U.S. kale had the highest concentrations of important carotenoids—about twice those in U.S. spinach and in Chinese cabbage from the Cook Islands. But levels in popular mainland vegetables, such as green beans and broccoli, were generally not as high as in popular Cook Island greens such as hibiscus leaves, silverbeet leaves and taro leaves, Khachik said.

Of the six carotenoids found in green vegetables, only three—alpha and beta carotene and lutein—are detectable in human blood, he explained.

Carotenoids generally break down when exposed to air, heat or light. In earlier analyses, Khachik said he saw big differences in the compounds' response to cooking. Some degrade completely, others only partially, and some remain stable while others convert to other carotenoids.

So the team analyzed three U.S. vegetables—broccoli, green beans and spinach—while raw and after being boiled, steamed and microwaved.

The compounds found in human blood—the carotenes and lutein—were heat stable, he said. “Even after boiling green beans for one hour, we ended up with the same amounts.”

And the method of cooking “didn’t make a hill of beans of difference.” Of the 560 plus carotenoids in nature, he said, only 20 to 30 are found in common U.S. fruits and vegetables, and only seven have so far been found in human blood. The four not found in green vegetables are in fruits and other vegetables.

Alpha and beta carotene and two other carotenoids are converted by the body into vitamin A. Lutein, zeaxanthin and lycopene—which makes tomatoes red—don’t have vitamin A activity, he said, but may still function as antioxidants.

Cancer results from cumulative damage to human cells’ DNA often caused by environmental pollution and by our own metabolic processes—which generate free radicals, a kind of molecular pickpocket. Antioxidants circulate through the body, “handcuffing” these pickpockets before they can damage cellular machinery.

The analyses were part of a larger effort to determine the types and levels of carotenoids in foods to complement cancer prevention studies. “Numerous studies have demonstrated that a high concentration of some of these carotenoids in human plasma are correlated with lower incidence of certain forms of cancer and therefore may be beneficial in prevention of cancer,” Khachik said.

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TEAM NAMED FOR FOLLOW-UP AGRICULTURAL TRADE MISSION TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today appointed seven private sector and government officials to meet with their counterparts in Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia to discuss agricultural trade prospects and other mutual agricultural interests. The mission, which is scheduled for Sept. 18-30, is a follow-up to visits made to the four countries in 1988 and will evaluate progress on the missions’ initial recommendations.

The visit is one of a series of U.S. agricultural trade and development missions administered jointly by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and State and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Congress authorized the agricultural trade and development missions program in December 1987 to encourage greater U.S. private sector and foreign country participation in U.S. agricultural trade and development activities. The program was announced by USDA in January 1988.

Dean R. Kleckner, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, and Robert D. Scherer, president of the National Cooperative Business Association, have been named mission leaders; Michel S. Paggi, international trade economist with AFBF, and Peggy A. Sheehan, vice president of the NCBA, will serve as executive secretaries of the mission; all served in the same positions for the 1988 missions.

Other members are: Wayne W. Sharp, U.S. coordinator for the missions program, who will serve as mission coordinator; Duane C. Acker, assistant to the administrator, AID; and William Piez, diplomat in residence and chairman of the Southeast Asia Agricultural Trade and Development Coordinating Committee for the State Department.

Participants were chosen for their knowledge of U.S. export programs, as well as the food needs, trade potential and economies of these Southeast Asian countries. After completion of the mission, the representatives will report their findings and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

For further information, contact Wayne W. Sharp, U.S. coordinator, Agricultural Trade and Development Missions Program, Room 3058-S, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250-1000; telephone (202) 382-0368.

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COYOTES DON'T LIKE SHAGGY (GUARD) DOG STORY

WASHINGTON—Picture a large, white, shaggy dog out for a late night walk. It's not the usual stroll a dog takes down a city street or across suburban backyards. Zeus is on patrol.

Zeus, a Great Pyrenees, guards Dee Blanchard's 2,500 sheep on their summer pasture in Idaho's Targhee National Forest. As winter

approaches, the dog will follow the sheep down the forested slopes to Blanchard's 480-acre ranch outside Chester.

Acting on centuries-old instinct, Zeus and similar 100- to 120-pound guard dogs are winning new admiration from sheep ranchers. Their herds are less prone to attack from coyotes, wild dogs and other predators. That has been documented in a survey by U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers living and working in sheep country.

About 10 years ago, USDA scientists in the Agricultural Research Service began studying livestock-guarding dogs at the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, Idaho.

"At that time, the dogs were considered a novelty," said Jeffrey S. Green, a wildlife biologist at the station.

"Livestock producers who had guard dogs were thought to be foolish, brave, desperate or a combination of all three," Green said. "Today, much of the skepticism is gone."

Green and colleagues mailed 1,000 questionnaires. They went to ranchers and farmers who rely on the dogs to safeguard cattle and goats as well as sheep.

Green said the survey, undertaken at the station, was possibly the largest done on the work of guard dogs on U.S. ranches. It confirmed that the burly dogs are not what marauding coyotes want to see on a sheep ranch.

At work on the ranches in the survey are several breeds of dogs, mostly Great Pyrenees from France and Spain, Komondors from Hungary, and Akbash and Anatolian Shepherds from Turkey.

Sheep rancher Dan Tracy, of Carr, Colo., needed dogs to help protect his 2,200 sheep as they grazed the Rocky Mountain foothills. Within a year, his Akbash named Bo and two other dogs were cutting Tracy's sheep losses to coyotes from 450 down to 10 or 12 a year.

"One day, when Bo was about two years old, he killed a porcupine that had wandered into the sheep," said Tracy. "We found him the next day with a mouthful of porcupine quills, chasing a coyote."

Bo's instinct to protect sheep became a familiar story in the station's survey.

Over 80 percent of the 399 ranchers who reported back said a guard dog was well worth its initial cost of about \$500, plus the dollar or two a day it takes to maintain them, Green said.

A former ARS scientist, Green now heads a program for animal damage control carried out at the station by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"I'd guess that in the last 10 years, from 5,000 to 8,000 dogs have been used as guardians on as many as 4,000 ranches and farms throughout the United States and Canada," Green said.

Still, these breeds face a big job. In Idaho alone, an estimated 18,800 sheep valued at \$1.75 million were killed by predators in 1987. That year, in Wyoming, 46,100 sheep valued at \$3.12 million were lost.

Rancher Ira Perkins of Bynum, Mont., has seen what a guard dog will tackle to protect sheep. His Akbash, Karla, has confronted black bears and even grizzly bears at times.

"She'll stand almost nose to nose with a bear and stare at it," he said. "If the bear tries to get her, she dodges just out of its reach.

"Eventually, Karla drives it away from the flock and puts it on the run. She then returns to the flock."

A dog's "I'll-take-care-of-you" attitude toward sheep takes hold at an early age. Ideally, guard dog pups should be about two months old when they are introduced to the sheep, Green said.

"That's when they start bonding to sheep," he explained. "After a while, the pups seem a part of the sheep family."

He recommends handling the dogs as little as possible and teaching them few voice commands. Such steps ensure that the dogs interact with sheep and act independently of humans.

At the Dubois station, dogs are given this kind of rearing and then closely watched to see that they "adopt" sheep roaming on grazing land. "We've placed about 160 dogs with ranchers in western states, mostly in Idaho, Wyoming, Oregon and Washington," Green said.

"The ranchers keep us informed on how well the dogs are doing," he said. "Ordinarily, I don't see them again unless it's to help work out a problem such as when a dog plays too rough with the lambs. That play ends when coyotes are around."

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Issued: Sept. 19, 1989

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USDA ANNOUNCES FINAL RESULTS OF 1989 FARM PROGRAM SIGNUP

WASHINGTON, Sept. 20—Final contracts signed by producers will place 171.2 million acres of feed grains, wheat, upland cotton, extra-long staple (ELS) cotton and rice in the 1989 commodity price support and acreage reductions programs, according to John Stevenson, acting administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Under the contracts 29.9 million of these acres will be idled and placed in a conserving use.

The acreage enrolled in 1989 programs represents 77.8 percent of the 220 million acres of total crop acreage bases established for these commodities.

This table is a national summary of the enrollment report.
1989 Farm Program Signup

	Effective Base	Enrolled Base	ARP*	0/92 50/92	Percent Enrolled
- - - - - (million acres) - - - - -					
Corn	82.7	66.8	6.3	3.8	80.8
Sorghum	16.2	12.7	1.1	1.8	78.5
Barley	12.3	8.5	.8	1.4	68.5
Oats	7.6	1.8	.1	.2	23.1
Feed Grains	118.8	89.8	8.3	7.2	75.5
Wheat	82.3	64.5	6.2	3.5	78.4
Cotton-Upland	14.6	13.0	3.1	.4	89.1
-ELS	.1	.003	.0001	.0	2.2
Rice	4.2	3.9	.9	.3	94.7
Total	220.0	171.2	18.5	11.4	77.8
NOTE: TOTALS MAY NOT ADD DUE TO ROUNDING. * Acreage Reduction Program					

Producers who participated in the annual commodity programs agreed to reduce their plantings from the established bases by at least 10 percent for wheat, corn, sorghum and barley, 5 percent for oats and ELS cotton and 25 percent for upland cotton and rice.

The tables by commodity and states, the number and percentage of farms and acreage signed up in the programs can be obtained from the USDA Office of Information, News Division, Room 404-A, Washington, DC, 20250. Telephone: (202) 447-4026, ask for press release 1223-89

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